

# SUGAR OVERLOAD

America is facing a supersized problem. People are eating much bigger portions of food than they were a few decades ago. And a lot of that food, like soda and hamburgers, is packed with sugar or fat. Many Americans have put on unhealthy amounts of weight. Some health experts say that supersized drinks and meals are one reason why.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg in New York City recently took action to control portion sizes. He proposed to ban the sale of sodas that are more than 16 ounces at restaurants, movie theaters, and sports arenas. The ban includes other sugary drinks too. He wants to help people get healthier.

## Words to Know

**portions:** amounts  
**proposed:** suggested an idea  
**obesity:** the condition of being very overweight  
**options:** choices

## Buckets of Soda

Some popular menu items are much bigger now than they used to be. For example, in 1955, the only soda size available at many restaurants was 7 ounces. Today you can buy a soda that's more than 30 ounces. The average burger has also grown. It's three times the size that it used to be! Experts say that eating too much food with lots of fat or sugar can lead to obesity. The number of Americans who are obese has doubled in the past 30 years. Obesity can cause serious health







problems. They include heart trouble and a disease called diabetes.


## A Big Debate

But not everyone agrees that the ban on extra-large drinks is a good idea. Some say that people should always have options, and that the city should work to teach people to make good choices. Others disagree with the mayor because they say it is not fair to focus on soda. Milkshakes and fruit juice also contain a lot of sugar, but large sizes of these drinks are still available.

## How Sweet Are Your Treats?

Sugar occurs naturally in some healthy foods, like fruit. But it's added to other foods and drinks. Experts say that kids should eat no more than 12 grams of added sugar each day.

Food/Drink	Average Number of Grams
 Can of soda	
 Scoop of vanilla ice cream	
 Chocolate chip cookie	

**KEY**  
 = 4 grams